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## Adopting developmental literacy continua

I teach English as a second language (ESL) to elementary students at International School Bangkok (ISB), Thailand, where English is the medium of instruction. ISB has close to 2,000 students representing more than 40 nationalities. Over 60% of the students are nonnative English speakers. Native and nonnative speakers are immersed in English across the curriculum. About one third of nonnative English speakers receive additional support through our ESL program in order to achieve the English-language proficiency necessary to participate independently in all academic areas. Developing solid language skills of all our students involves a partnership between ESL and mainstream teachers. They co-teach, plan together, and engage in professional learning in order to promote literacy and language development for all students. One of the major initiatives of ISB in the area of literacy is the adoption of reading and writing developmental continua.

The following article is the result of my reflection on the process of adoption, purpose, and value of literacy continua for diverse educational settings.

### Search

In the search for better assessments and instructional practices, our school, like many other educational institutions, has been surfing the waves of literacy innovations, refined visions, and philosophies for quite a while.

Anyone browsing through information on this subject would be struck by the sheer volume of creative solutions and materials available in English. There is so much on literacy education in publications, the Internet, teacher training programs, and so on that it is an overwhelm-

ing task to absorb and interpret the information and make appropriate choices and decisions. There is a wealth of information available in other languages as well.

Unfortunately, it often remains unknown unless it is translated into English. Reading educational literature in other languages highlights differences, of course, in philosophy and approaches to teaching literacy, but also highlights many similarities. After all, in different parts of the world education in general and literacy in particular have many common goals. The cognitive-developmental philosophy embracing the "developmental view" of children's learning has been shared by a number of psychologists and educators around the world and provides solid theoretical support for many educational initiatives developed in the United States and other English-speaking countries. These ideas are behind many innovative strategies and creative instructional practices that highlight the value of gradual construction of meaning through social interaction and the role of educators scaffolding the learner through the stages of development. Neuroscientific research is often used to describe and explain the process of cognitive development and maturation that are essential in understanding the relationship between brain structure, emerging functions, and learning. It seems that there has been a natural evolution of ideas supporting the developmental approach that appeals so much to educators of young children.

As I mentioned previously, our school is a linguistically and culturally diverse educational setting, and there is a growing need for authentic and comprehensive literacy assessment tools, especially at the elementary level when children

are learning to read, write, listen, and speak purposefully. Our 6- and 7-year-old, mostly multilingual, beginning readers and writers differ widely in their level of skills, range of experiences, and rate of development, as well as in their linguistic proficiency and cultural background.

The parents, of course, are as diverse as the students in their attitudes, assumptions, and expectations. Most of them, however, are usually interested in straightforward and comprehensible information about their children's progress. They want to have a clear idea of what the numbers and letters on the report card mean, how their child's performance compares with the performance of other students in class and other children of the same age, what their children's strengths and weaknesses are, and what they can do to help. In other words, parents want to know what it takes to develop literacy skills and what the whole journey through this process might look like in the context of a given educational setting. I was looking for the same information when I had my first encounter with an international school as a parent some 14 years ago.

### **Developmental literacy continua**

A tool that can address some of these issues is a literacy continuum, which is based on the developmental approach and is gaining wide support among elementary school teachers. A few developmental literacy continua have been in use for the past 10 years or so in schools where English is the medium of instruction. The most well known are the First Steps literacy continua developed by the Education Department of Western Australia (Education Department of Western Australia, 1994), and the Reading and Writing Continuums (as well as an oral language continuum for students who are learning English as a second language) (Campbell Hill, 2001). These have been used across the United States and in a growing number of international schools.

All literacy continua, including the ones mentioned above, share a similar format. They resemble a timeline, or a learning progression, broken into stages or phases that can easily fit on one piece of paper. Each stage or phase consists of key indicators or descriptors that define skills, knowledge, and behaviors that constitute the process of acquiring competence in read-

ing, writing, or oral language. These descriptors are typically worded in a positive way, stating what a child is able to do, and appear to have been selected on the basis of empirical data accumulated by researchers and educators observing children developing language and literacy skills in formal and informal settings. By analyzing evidence from samples of children's work and from a variety of assessments—including observations and anecdotal notes—and matching them with the descriptors, a teacher can place a student at an appropriate stage on each continuum. This placement should help the teacher to determine areas of strengths and weaknesses of the student and define further instructional steps. For example, placing a student at a "developing" stage, where he or she writes one or two sentences about a topic, would require a teacher to plan for deliberate guiding strategies in order to take the student to the next, "beginning" stage, writing several sentences, and then eventually to the "expanding" stage, writing short fiction and nonfiction (Campbell Hill, 2001). The strategies might include modeling, providing appropriate samples, demonstrating steps in the writing process, providing support in small groups and one-on-one instruction, giving ongoing feedback, teaching students to assess their own writing, and so on. Placing students on the continuum several times a year would show the amount of growth and the rate of development over time.

When I looked at developmental continua as a teacher for the first time about 10 years ago, the idea of using them immediately appealed to me. It is easy to see why. The language of the descriptors is positive and comprehensible, and the format of the continua is friendly—usually one or two pages with headings indicating the symbolic name of the stage, the approximate age of children, and the list of key descriptors defining the stage. This brief outline creates a clear mental picture. For those who appreciate a narrative format, there are accompanying materials, including narrative "portraits of readers" or writers (Campbell Hill, 2001). These are very useful in helping parents see their child's development in the context of the whole journey toward attaining proficiency in literacy. These tools, I thought, obviously had potential to be great organizers for the complex factual

evidence teachers collect. It became obvious to me how they could serve several very important purposes—mapping instances of student learning, tracking and reporting their progress over time, and guiding teaching and learning.

Imagine you are a teacher at the beginning of the school year. You have a blueprint of a possible or even desired or optimal progression in literacy development for all students on one piece of paper. You can use it to map each child's performance and rate of development. This information will suggest areas you and your student need to focus on in order to move to the next stage. You can also use it to "ballpark" a group of students or to determine the status of the whole class. It can help you plan for the overall instructional focus and supporting classroom structures and strategies.

Imagine you are a parent. The continua can answer some of the questions in which you are most interested. Instead of just receiving a letter or a number grade as an assessment of your child's work, the relevance of which is somewhat obscure, you will have an explanation—through the descriptors on the continuum—of what your child is able to do and a glimpse of where he or she is going. By looking at the outline of the stages and the descriptors, you will be able to identify your child's strengths and weaknesses as well as further expectations and steps to be taken.

Now imagine you are a student. With the help of the teacher you can have a clear, connected picture of your learning and become, to a certain degree, a decision maker in the process. That can be both stimulating and challenging.

However, some might say that very young children are not developmentally ready to analyze their learning and make appropriate decisions about it. I would counter that it is surprising how many young children do seem to possess the innate ability to analyze and assess their own behavior when performing creative tasks such as drawing or playing with blocks. I believe that it is possible to build on these strengths. Any learning begins with input and support of knowledgeable adults, and very young students can develop the skills to think about their learning and verbalize their thoughts with their teachers' consistent guidance.

## Adoption

Our school attempted to introduce developmental continua a few years ago. There was a beginning stage for disseminating the information. The seeds were planted, but they went through a long period of gestation. Some teachers were already familiar with the tool and had been using it for their classroom purposes. They reported that it helped them to observe their students and collect assessment data in a more meaningful way (they knew what they were looking for), as well as establish more efficient communication with parents. Other teachers filed away the information for possible future use or reference in view of other pressing needs and responsibilities. It often seems safe and reasonable to stick to established routines rather than try out something new. Some teachers seem to be more amenable to adopting innovations, and like to experiment with new tools and materials. Others need more support and professional training before they can embrace a new idea. When the whole faculty is involved in a learning process, it sounds reasonable to take into account a wide range of differences among the teachers in the way they learn and internalize instructional practices.

Around this same time the school was looking at ways to improve the system of reporting student progress, by creating a new report card and portfolio of supporting materials. The new report card was based on curricular outcomes and emphasized reaching the acceptable standard. However, it failed to address effectively the aspect of "growth and development" over time. The portfolio, part of our reporting system and designed to support the element of growth, lacked clear and meaningful interpretation and integration with other assessment pieces.

When the seeds finally started to germinate, we were not quite aware of how radical a change adopting continua would be, and what a school could anticipate while going through the process—especially when they looked so attractive and easy to use. Any new tool comes at a price; unfortunately, the price tag isn't always visible. There was a temptation to introduce the new tools throughout the elementary school without further delay. However, the roots had to become stronger and reach down into the rich soil of daily planning and teaching and receive nutri-

ents in the form of ongoing professional development. We realized that no matter how attractive a whole-school initiative might be, enthusiasm on the part of a small group had to be matched by enthusiasm on the part of many. Even though the need for better assessment practices had been in the air for a while, and general feedback on the continua was quite favorable, the school was not ready to introduce them formally.

Further work on curriculum documents identified the need for more common understandings, practices, and agreements. Most teachers I work with share in principle a common philosophical mindset, based on research and supported by personal experience, that young children develop skills gradually and in similar ways but at different rates, and that the stages of literacy development are generally predictable and can be described. It is, therefore, reasonable to address the needs of individual students and scaffold them through the process rather than deliver the information and evaluate the contents of the "receptacle." It is not very productive to wonder whether or not the necessary information or skill is present because it was not "given" by the teacher or not "received" by the student. Better results can be achieved through assessing the current achievements, supporting students at their level, and providing a bridge to the next stage. This common understanding, which is often taken for granted, is interpreted in different ways through a variety of curricular documents and realized differently through instructional practices. It was obvious that philosophies needed to be clearly articulated and fine-tuned.

It seems that teachers and administrators move through stages and phases of a learning continuum, just as students do. Some were already competent users and ready to move forward: "I've been using this continuum for the past two years and sharing it with parents. It already fits my way of teaching and reporting"; or, "I have been trained to use continua and incorporate them in my teaching practice." Others were just getting familiar with the tool and needed more time: "I have never used a continuum, and I am not sure I will be able to explain the descriptors to the parents and be confident in placing students on the continuum without having additional information and training."

After having taken a resolute stand to introduce and adopt the continua as soon as possible, we then took a step back in order to identify our needs. Aligning all educational components—including philosophies, curricular outcomes, and assessment pieces—with the continua and shaping instructional practices thus became the first priorities. This direction is invaluable in terms of professional development. The whole faculty has to revisit and reinterpret the existing materials in light of the new framework and develop common language and common goals, design supporting materials, and investigate best practices. In the process, teachers had to become intimately familiar with the continua and the descriptors. As often happens, the more familiar one becomes, the more issues begin to emerge.

The language on the continua seemed comprehensible, but each teacher interpreted it in a unique way, creating a unique mental image of what each descriptor should mean in practice based on the teacher's experience and background knowledge. We realized that there were discrepancies in our interpretations as soon as we tried to practice determining students' place on the continuum by analyzing students' writing samples. There were many heated debates. "My kindergarten cannot be at the same stage as your second grader. It doesn't make sense." There is a danger of visualizing a developmental level through the grade-level lenses or age expectations. It is difficult for a fourth-grade teacher, for example, to imagine what a first-grade piece of writing might look like. In this instance, the European model of one teacher leading students through the elementary/primary school seems to me a better way of providing consistency and continuity in the learning and emotional development of young children. To avoid this pitfall it was necessary to establish cross-grade-level communication—to collect massive amounts of evidence and place exemplars (or samples) on the continuum as a school. When many teachers are involved, meanings have to be negotiated and common understandings have to be reached. Collecting supporting data became the focus at this stage so that each new evaluator did not have to interpret the descriptors independently. A visual, concrete piece of evidence—or an exemplar that shows what it looks like to

"organize ideas in a logical sequence," for example—would support the descriptors, and any new sample could be matched against the available ones. The samples appropriately labeled "anchor pieces" provide clarity and stability to the language of the descriptors. Our school had a few sessions for teachers to place students' samples on the continuum together. These sessions were time consuming but necessary. The teachers' comments confirmed that. "We need to look at more samples. This is so useful—the picture is becoming clearer." Common meetings highlighted the need for and value of collaboration. "The most difficult and the most rewarding experience is working as a group making common decisions." When a number of exemplars had been collected, and placement was becoming a more precise act, teachers realized that there were many additional dimensions to language, for example, a variety of text types. The teachers began to see that the scope of work to be done was greater than they had anticipated initially. Narrative samples on their own obviously don't give a complete picture of strengths and weaknesses. Children write and read a variety of texts and can be more proficient with one type than with another. The texts that are usually analyzed first are narratives. The texts that students will need to master certainly extend beyond that. In fact, text types that students will use extensively through their learning across the curriculum will become less and less narrative and more formal in style and format.

We are still a long way from having all the necessary assessments in place and instructional practices aligned. However, teachers are beginning to see clearly that continua bring into focus the connectedness of the process of teaching, learning, and assessment. Each assessment, each piece of evidence, is not random but is designed to highlight specific student learning that can be matched with a descriptor or descriptors on the continuum and, at the same time, be related to certain outcomes of the curriculum.

As teachers continue to become familiar with the reading and writing developmental continua, other issues emerge. Most teachers in our school, as well as in many other schools where the developmental continua are at different stages of implementation, agree that it is much easier to bring early elementary (K–2) than upper

elementary (3–5) grades on board. Numerous discussions on this issue highlighted a shift in thinking, consolidating toward middle school years, that the developmental aspects of learning are not important anymore. There is less integration of language across the curriculum, and there are fewer opportunities to collect consistent literacy data related to other subject areas. Older children don't make dramatic growth along a continuum of skills and behaviors. They read and write a wider variety of text types, and it is harder to differentiate between higher levels of proficiency. However, many educators believe that older students can be assessed and assisted better through determining their place on a developmental continuum.

### Initiative

As we were getting familiar with the continua, it became clear that the descriptors on the reading and writing continua did not provide enough information about second-language learners, nor did they serve as diagnostic tools for ESL teachers. There are certainly similarities in the general direction of native- and second-language development. However, there are many differences as well. Children learning a second language can demonstrate a wide range of literacy skills in their native language or have no literacy background whatsoever. They can have minor glitches in mother-tongue performance, but demonstrate essential difficulties in acquisition of a foreign language. Some children acquire conversational proficiency in no time, while others go through a painful and lengthy process. There is a whole range of constraints and conditions that could affect some or all areas of language and literacy development of a second-language learner. The need for better assessment of these children and clearer approaches to effective teaching is greater than ever.

We decided to create our own literacy continua, including oral language continua, which would complement the classroom continua and be appropriate for our particular purpose. These tools would allow us to create a better and more precise picture of the linguistic development of a child, embrace a broader sense of literacy including oral language, and make enlightened diagnostic judgments. Continua would also

provide a framework for improved assessment, giving a clear direction for collecting evidence and teaching.

Our decision to create language development continua grew out of the need to improve our instructional, assessment, and reporting practices. At the same time it served as a link to the whole-school ESL curriculum. Previous decisions to base the ESL curriculum on stages of second-language development fit very well with the idea of language development continua. We started by determining the number of stages relevant to the elementary school and identifying the descriptors that could speak to the development of language. Looking through professional literature, we were trying to come up with definitions that would best describe a student at a certain stage of development along the lines of three categories that also relate to the curricular outcomes—communicative purposes (what the student is able to do by means of language), linguistic structures and features (vocabulary and grammar), and specific language-learning strategies.

There is a wealth of literature on second-language development, as well as ready-to-use stages and profiles, descriptors, and outcomes. It seems, however, that the benefits of creating materials are many. Among them is the possibility of building a common language and common understandings in the process of collaboration without the need to articulate and explain each descriptor of a ready-made continuum. Collaborative efforts, including research of available professional literature, adoption of common language, and negotiation of meaning, constitute, in the true sense, professional development that stems from common goals, involves a clearly defined plan, and is based on the common needs of students and teachers. Such collaborative effort taps into many areas of knowledge and provides an excellent learning experience.

A draft that emerged as a result of our efforts had to be matched against real students and real language samples to make sure it was usable and determined the essential elements of learning, rather than including every movement along the grammatical or functional sequence. Needless to say, the importance of collecting evidence, supporting samples or

“anchor pieces” for the stages on the continuum, came to the fore. We started by verbalizing our mental representations of the learner and then brought in the supporting evidence. I know it is possible to start from the other end by looking at samples, observing and recording student behavior, and then putting the evidence into a sequence (Griffin, Smith, & Martin, 2003). This is a matter of approach to a task, but wherever you start, the importance of aligning the samples and the descriptors cannot be over emphasized.

The work on the continua goes on, as does the work on the ESL curriculum. The elementary language development continua are envisioned as an integral part of the general framework of the ESL curriculum.

It is fair to say that our school has been going through the process of adopting literacy continua rather smoothly, yet with a full view of possible and very real pitfalls and a few painful moments. I am sure we will have more such moments ahead. As teachers continue to expand the knowledge and experience in making continua an integral part of their instructional practice, create new materials, and launch new initiatives, it is important to be realistic about time frames and expectations. Whatever it takes, however, it is a worthwhile endeavor. It serves as a learning experience for the whole school—teachers, administrators, students, and parents. It gives new dimension and meaning to assessing and reporting student progress, and it enriches, guides, and differentiates instruction.

### **Considerations for various educational settings**

As I mentioned before, continua are used in a growing number of schools. They are conducive to differentiated instruction that places value on an individual child's personality, learning style, background knowledge, rate of development, and attitudes toward learning. It seems to me that this framework could be useful in a wider range of linguistic and educational settings. Developmental literacy continua, of course, cannot be simply translated from English, because linguistic and cultural practices in schools around the world are quite different. Educators, however, can start planting the seeds of common understandings about cultural, educational, and philosophical

attitudes of their schools by collecting evidence of essential elements of learning. Developing continua requires strong roots that are based on the commitment of teachers and administrators, an ongoing supply of nutrients, and common professional development and collaborative efforts aimed at alignment of perceptions and practices.

The job of adopting a new educational framework is quite overwhelming, and the steps are quite radical, in many cases involving change in the curricula documents and the mindset of administrators and teachers involved. For the change to happen there must be a strong enough reason, such as addressing the needs of a diverse student population in a better way.

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The sample on the following page, from the writing continuum developed by Campbell Hill (2001), highlights the usefulness and the limitations of this continuum for assessment of second-language learners.

The highlighted descriptors reflect the writing of Hongpeng, a 7-year-old student from China, at the beginning of the year (*italics*) and in the middle of the year (**bold**). He started learning English six months ago when he entered summer school at ISB. According to the bold descriptors on the writing continuum, he is writing at grade level—he is where most of the students in his class would be at this time of the year. He has made considerable growth from the beginning to the middle of the year. This is valuable information for the classroom teacher. The completed continuum will help the teacher to design lessons to move Hongpeng along the continuum and teach him to write other text types, organize ideas in a logical sequence, and add description and detail, as well as revise and edit his own work. Hongpeng's writing is quite advanced in terms of mechanics and conventions. The teacher might think of strategies to consolidate and extend these skills. The continuum will also serve as a reporting tool during parent-teacher conferences. The parents will be thrilled to see how much progress their child has made.

From the ESL teacher's point of view, however, the information is incomplete. The continuum fails to pinpoint aspects of writing that relate to Hongpeng's sentence structure, word choice, and spelling, as well as his literacy experience. Hongpeng is literate in his mother tongue and transfers some general cognitive and literacy-related skills and strategies to the new language. Defining these traits of Hongpeng's writing will change the focus from learning to write to learning to write in a second language and help the teacher address Hongpeng's language learning needs in a better way.



## Writing continuum (reprinted with permission from Christopher-Gordon)

| Preconventional<br>Ages 3–5   | Emerging<br>Ages 4–6  | Developing<br>Ages 5–7   | Beginning<br>Ages 6–8  | Expanding<br>Ages 7–9   |
|---|---|--|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Relies primarily on pictures to convey meaning.</li> <li>Begins to label and add “words” to pictures.</li> <li>Writes first name.</li> <li>Demonstrates awareness that print conveys meaning.</li> <li>Makes marks other than drawing on paper (scribbles).</li> <li>Writes random recognizable letters to represent words.</li> <li>Tells about own pictures and writing.</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Uses pictures and print to convey meaning.</li> <li>Writes words to describe or support pictures.</li> <li>Copies signs, labels, names, and words (environmental print).</li> <li>Demonstrates understanding of letter/sound relationship.</li> <li>Prints with upper case letters.</li> <li>Matches letters to sounds.</li> <li>Uses beginning consonants to make words.</li> <li>Uses beginning and ending consonants to make words.</li> <li>Pretends to read own writing.</li> <li>Sees self as writer.</li> <li>Takes risks with writing.</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Writes 1–2 sentences about a topic.</li> <li>Writes names and familiar words.</li> <li>Generates own ideas for writing.</li> <li>Writes from top to bottom, left to right, and front to back.</li> <li>Intermixes upper and lower case letters.</li> <li>Experiments with capitals.</li> <li>Experiments with punctuation.</li> <li>Begins to use spacing between words.</li> <li>Uses growing awareness of sound segments (e.g., phonemes, syllables, rhymes) to write words.</li> <li>Spells words on the basis of sounds without regard for conventional spelling patterns.</li> <li>Uses beginning, middle, and ending sounds to make words.</li> <li>Begins to read own writing.</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Writes several sentences about a topic.</li> <li>Writes about observations and experiences.</li> <li>Writes short nonfiction pieces (simple facts about a topic) with guidance.</li> <li>Chooses own writing topics.</li> <li>Reads own writing and notices mistakes with guidance.</li> <li>Revises by adding details with guidance.</li> <li>Uses spacing between words consistently.</li> <li>Forms most letters legibly.</li> <li>Writes pieces that self and others can read.</li> <li>Uses phonetic spelling to write independently.</li> <li>Spells simple words and some high frequency words correctly.</li> <li>Begins to use periods and capital letters correctly.</li> <li>Shares own writing with others.</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Writes short fiction and poetry with guidance.</li> <li>Writes a variety of short nonfiction pieces (e.g., facts about a topic, letters, lists) with guidance.</li> <li>Writes with a central idea.</li> <li>Writes using complete sentences.</li> <li>Organizes ideas in a logical sequence in fiction and nonfiction writing with guidance.</li> <li>Begins to recognize and use interesting language.</li> <li>Uses several prewriting strategies (e.g., web, brainstorm) with guidance.</li> <li>Listens to others’ writing and offers feedback.</li> <li>Begins to consider suggestions from others about own writing.</li> <li>Adds description and detail with guidance.</li> <li>Edits for capitals and punctuation with guidance.</li> <li>Publishes own writing with guidance.</li> <li>Writes legibly.</li> <li>Spells most high frequency words correctly and moves toward conventional spelling.</li> <li>Identifies own writing strategies and sets goals with guidance.</li> </ul>  |
| Bridging<br>Ages 8–10   | Fluent<br>Ages 9–11   | Proficient<br>Ages 10–13   | Connecting<br>Ages 11–14   | Independent   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Writes about feelings and opinions.</li> <li>Writes fiction with clear beginning, middle, and end.</li> <li>Writes poetry using carefully chosen language with guidance.</li> <li>Writes organized nonfiction pieces (e.g., reports, letters, and lists) with guidance.</li> <li>Begins to use paragraphs to organize ideas.</li> <li>Uses strong verbs, interesting language, and dialogue with guidance.</li> <li>Seeks feedback on writing.</li> <li>Revises for clarity with guidance.</li> <li>Revises to enhance ideas by adding description and detail.</li> <li>Uses resources (e.g., thesaurus and word lists) to make writing more effective with guidance.</li> <li>Edits for punctuation, spelling, and grammar.</li> <li>Publishes writing in polished format with guidance.</li> <li>Increases use of visual strategies, spelling rules, and knowledge of word parts to spell correctly.</li> <li>Uses commas and apostrophes correctly with guidance.</li> <li>Uses criteria for effective writing to set own writing goals with guidance.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Begins to write organized fiction and nonfiction (e.g., reports, letters, biographies, and autobiographies).</li> <li>Develops stories with plots that include problems and solutions with guidance.</li> <li>Creates characters in stories with guidance.</li> <li>Writes poetry using carefully chosen language.</li> <li>Begins to experiment with sentence length and complex sentence structure.</li> <li>Varies leads and endings with guidance.</li> <li>Uses description, details, and similes with guidance.</li> <li>Uses dialogue with guidance.</li> <li>Uses a range of strategies for planning writing.</li> <li>Adapts writing for purpose and audience with guidance.</li> <li>Revises for specific writing traits (e.g., ideas, organization, word choice, sentence fluency, voice, and conventions) with guidance.</li> <li>Incorporates suggestions from others about own writing with guidance.</li> <li>Edits for punctuation, spelling, and grammar with greater precision.</li> <li>Uses tools (e.g., dictionaries, word lists, and spell checkers) to edit with guidance.</li> <li>Develops criteria for effective writing in different genres with guidance.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Writes persuasively about ideas, feelings, and opinions.</li> <li>Creates plots with problems and solutions.</li> <li>Begins to develop the main characters and describe detailed settings.</li> <li>Begins to write organized and fluent nonfiction, including simple bibliographies.</li> <li>Writes cohesive paragraphs including reasons and examples with guidance.</li> <li>Uses transitional sentences to connect paragraphs.</li> <li>Varies sentence structure, leads, and endings.</li> <li>Begins to use descriptive language, details, and similes.</li> <li>Uses voice to evoke emotional response from readers.</li> <li>Begins to integrate information on a topic from a variety of sources.</li> <li>Begins to revise for specific writing traits (e.g., ideas, organization, word choice, sentence fluency, voice, and conventions).</li> <li>Uses tools (e.g., dictionaries, word lists, spell checkers) to edit independently.</li> <li>Selects and publishes writing in polished format independently.</li> <li>Begins to use complex punctuation (e.g., commas, colons, semicolons, quotation marks) appropriately.</li> <li>Begins to set goals and identify strategies to improve writing in different genres.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Writes in a variety of genres and forms for different audiences and purposes independently.</li> <li>Creates plots with a climax.</li> <li>Creates detailed, believable settings and characters in stories.</li> <li>Writes organized, fluent, and detailed nonfiction independently, including bibliographies with correct format.</li> <li>Writes cohesive paragraphs including supportive reasons and examples.</li> <li>Uses descriptive language, details, similes, and imagery to enhance ideas independently.</li> <li>Begins to use dialogue to enhance character development.</li> <li>Incorporates personal voice in writing with increasing frequency.</li> <li>Integrates information on a topic from a variety of sources independently.</li> <li>Constructs charts, graphs, and tables to convey information when appropriate.</li> <li>Uses prewriting strategies effectively to organize and strengthen writing.</li> <li>Revises for specific writing traits (e.g., ideas, organization, word choice, sentence fluency, voice, and conventions) independently.</li> <li>Includes deletion in revision strategies.</li> <li>Incorporates suggestions from others on own writing independently.</li> <li>Uses complex punctuation (e.g., commas, colons, semicolons, quotation marks) with increasing accuracy.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Writes organized, fluent, accurate, and in-depth nonfiction, including references with correct bibliographic format.</li> <li>Writes cohesive, fluent, and effective poetry and fiction.</li> <li>Uses a clear sequence of paragraphs with effective transitions.</li> <li>Begins to incorporate literary devices (e.g., imagery, metaphors, personification, and foreshadowing).</li> <li>Weaves dialogue effectively into stories.</li> <li>Develops plots, characters, setting, and mood (literary elements) effectively.</li> <li>Begins to develop personal voice and style of writing.</li> <li>Revises through multiple drafts independently.</li> <li>Seeks feedback from others and incorporates suggestions in order to strengthen own writing.</li> <li>Publishes writing for different audiences and purposes in polished format independently.</li> <li>Internalizes writing process.</li> <li>Uses correct grammar (e.g., subject/verb agreement and verb tense) consistently.</li> <li>Writes with confidence and competence on a range of topics independently.</li> <li>Perseveres through complex or challenging writing projects independently.</li> <li>Sets writing goals independently by analyzing and evaluating own writing.</li> </ul> |